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Attorney General Beau Biden Continues Fight to Protect Children from Online Predators

MySpace agrees to enact measures aimed at better safeguarding children on its web site

In another move to protect Delaware's children from online predators Attorney General Beau Biden joined 49 Attorneys General to announce that social networking site MySpace has agreed to take several specific steps to better protect children who use its web site.

"I sought this office to better protect our children at the playground, in the home, and on the internet," Attorney General Biden stated. "Predators can use social networking sites like MySpace to do harm to our children. That's why I'm proud to stand with so many Attorneys General in this agreement with MySpace regarding social networking safety."

In a victory for social networking safety, Attorney General Biden and 48 states plus the District of Columbia today announced that MySpace has agreed to significant steps to better protect children on its web site, including creation of a broad-based task force to explore and develop age and identity verification technology.

In today's agreement, MySpace acknowledges that identity authentication tools are vital to protecting children from online predators and inappropriate content and it has agreed to take several specific actions. These actions include commitments to:

- Develop an e-mail registry. Parents may submit children's email addresses to the registry and MySpace will restrict access from users of those addresses
- Make the default setting "private" for profiles of 16- and 17-year-old users
- Respond within 72 hours to consumer complaints of inappropriate content or activity and specify the steps taken to address them
- Dedicate additional resources to better identify and remove inappropriate content and develop monitoring software for parents
- Establish a 24-hour hotline to respond to inquiries from law enforcement

MySpace will also develop age and identity verification tools and will invite other websites, industry experts, child protection groups and technology companies to participate in that process.

Biden noted that although MySpace is making a commitment to enact specific changes, the agreement leaves the door open for the Delaware Department of Justice to take additional measures if they are necessary to protect users, such as litigation and new legislation.

Attorney General Biden's participation in this agreement is the latest in a series of actions he has taken to ensure the safety of MySpace users. Twice in 2007, Attorney General Biden issued subpoenas to MySpace demanding information about convicted sex offenders who registered to use that site.

Since taking office in January, 2007, Attorney General Biden has focused his efforts on protecting children. In March, 2007, he created the Delaware Department of Justice Child Predator Unit, with a staff dedicated to pursuing and prosecuting criminals who prey on kids. He led the formation of the Delaware Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force that brings together the Department of Justice, Delaware State Police, and federal law enforcement agencies in a united front against online predators and child pornographers. He also fought for the adoption of a tougher sex offender registry law through the Adam Walsh enhancements to Delaware's Megan's Law.

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